

FAITH'S VICTORY

over NATURE:

OR,

The unparallel'd president of an un-
naturally Religious Father.

Delivered in a SERMON Preached at
the Funerals of the hopefull young Gentleman
Master John Rushout:

Son and Heire to Master *JOHN RUSHOUT*
Merchant and Citizen of *LONDON.*

By *NATHANAEL HARDY*
Master of Arts, and Preacher to the Parish of
DIONIS Back-Church.

*Was not Abraham our Father justified by works, when he
had offered Isaac his son upon the Altar.*

*Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works
was faith made perfect, JAM. 2. 21, 22.*

*Transcendunt fides rationis fidem, humane naturæ usum, experientie ter-
minos, &c.*

*Vetus obediens mandatum non procrastinat, sed statim parat aures audi-
endi, linguam vocis, pedes itineri, manus operi; & se totum in usus colligit ut
mandatum peragat imperantis. Idem.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Nathanael Webb*, and *William Grafton*, at
the Grey-hound in *Pauls Church-yard*, 1648.

1871

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To my Right Worthy FRIEND,
 Mr. JOHN RVSHOV
 Of LONDON Merchant, and Inhabitant in the Parish of *Dionis*
 Back-Church, the blessings of the
 throne and footstool.

Honoured SIR,

I Was a sorrowfull losse occasioned the delivery
 of this Sermon in your ears, and the sea-
 sonable comfort you then found, caused those
 desires which (being to me commands) occa-
 sion the presenting of it to your eyes.

The tryall wherewith God hath been pleased to exercise
 you, cannot but be grievous, yet a patient sufferance and
 sanctified use will make it precious: no better means of
 support under, and benefit by this tryall then faith, which
 is both a powerfull Antidote against the crosse, and a skil-
 full Alchymist to extract spirituall advantage out of tem-
 porall losses.

It is true you have lost a hopefull son, but faith will eye
 God, as a wise and gracious Father. Charity comforts you
 in the hope that he hath gained, the enjoyment of glory by
 his dissolution: Faith will instruct you in the Christian
 art, how to gain increase of grace by this affliction. It is
 the justice of God that hee never punisheth without a
 cause, it is his mercy that he ordereth all to a good end, let

The Epistle Dedicatory.

repentance find out and bewail sin deserving, and faith will apprehend the benefit intended.

Oh divine grace of faith, many daughters have done worthily, but thou surmountest them all; thou regulatest our actions, and moderatest our passions, thou teachest us how to enjoy, and supplyest us in what wee want; by thee wee finde the sweetnesse of a God in the creature-comforts we have, and the sweetnesse of those comforts we lose in a God.

And now worthy Sir, what fitter counsell could I prescribe you then this of Faith? what fuller example of faiths energie could I set before you then that of Abraham, who by faith gave up that Isaac to God, whom God had conferr'd on him in love. The picture of this believing Patriark, offering up his obedient Isaac, you have delineated in the following Sermon.

Let Abrahams steps be your walk, and his bosome shall be your rest; imitate him as a son in the grace of Faith, and you shall be an heire together with him in the grace of life, which is the prayer of him who is

Your devoted servant in all Christian
and Ministeriall offices,

NATH. HARDY.

Errata.

Page 4. line 13 devoute, the former l 28. for peoole r. people p. 6. l. 5. x. is transerre, p. 13. in marg pone *Chrysol.* p. 14. in marg pone *Chrysol.*

Imprimatur, *J. Cranford.*

On the death of Master John Rushout,
*eldest Sonne of Master John Rushout, of
London Merchant.*

WHo slew all these? was *Nimbs's* sonne's demand,
When's will was done by false *Samaritan's* hand,
When heads were heapt, and Nobles (by the rude)

Were made the many-headed multitude;
When slain *Youth*, and *Beauty* were heap'd on high,
Virtue and *Strength* pil'd with *Nobility*.

Who slew all these? each tear now seems to say,
The mourner drops by this sad heap of clay.

Nor doe they seek censure, for in *Rushout's* sonne
There's a heap'd funerall, though he be but one.
Logick is out, it's precepts erre in this,
He is but one, and yet a number is.

Arithmetick mistakes in him, for we
If not divide, yet one may multiply.

Virtue and *Beauty*, *Strength* and *Youth* are here
Heap'd up and pil'd together: on this Bier

A summe of *Graces* are, Hee's a *Total* than,
Not one of these, but might compleat a man.

The teats that from his Fathers eyes doe run,
Fall for but one Sonne, and yet not for One.

When he laments his *Beauty* so soon gone,
Doth he not Weep for his Dead *Absalon*?

He mourns and praises his *obedient Will*
'Tis for his *Isaac* sure those tears distill.

When he recounts the *Wisdom* of his Sonne,
And Sighs, sighs he not for his *Solomon*?

When how *religious*! and a tear let fall,
Then sure he weeps at *Joseph's* funerall.

Absalon, *Isaac*, *Joseph*, *Solomon*,
Are all deceas'd in this his onely **JOHN**.

Who slew all these then? not the barbarous hand,
Of forreign stranger, nor the dire command

Of the Theeve's Captain, where the riddle's this,
Out laws obey, and rape obedience is.
No death abroad, strange ayre his breath supplies,
He travels and lives, but returns and dies.
Thus have we seen the Pearl or Diamond stone
(Brought to the cooler, from the hotter Zone)
Escape the threats of th' Rocks, and th' Oceans some,
And yet in th' Harbour have been lost at home :
Having past the Pyrats, and the watry way,
Made, or the *Customers*, or the *Thames* his prey.
Is this the welcote thy return'd Natives have
O *England*? entertainment in a *grave*?
When to thy long'd for Soile thy Sonnes return,
Canst finde no lodging for them, but their *Urne*?
When from strange Climates to their own they come
Has't no home for them, but their longest *Home*?
Fame calls thee *Eden*, if thou a *Garden* be,
'Tis such as *Joseph's*, the *Sepulchre's* in thee.
The terme's too good; since on thine none thou prey,
Wee'l change thy name, thou art *Aceldama*.
Since now thy Bowels are with Funerals full,
Thou'rt or a *field of blood*, or *place of Scull*.
Death dwels within thee, makes his Mansion here,
Hath ta'ne a Lease (we dread) for many years,
A *Lease* not made by *Law*, but *War*; yet good,
'Cause seal'd with *Swords* and written in our *blood*.
Thus cruell art thou, and like to be, yet He
Hath caus'd to thank thee for thy cruelty.
In thee he dy'd, but to thy Sins and fears,
Thy Crown's of *Cypresse*, he a *Laurel* wears.
He rests in *Peace* secured from thy harmes,
Hears glad *Hallelujah's*, but thou *Alarms*.
The Grave and Heaven's his *Arke*, whilst that the flood
Sweeps thee away, he floats above thy *Blood*.
The Grave and Heaven's his *House*, where he hid by,
And the destroying *Angel* passe him by.
Death leads to *Life*. He dy'd young, yet shall be,
A *Youth* as long-liv'd as *Eternitie*.

J. THOMPSON.



FAITHS VICTORY over NATVRE:

OR,

The unparallel'd president of an un-
naturally Religious Father.

HEBR. II. 17.

By Faith ABRAHAM *when hee was*
tryed, offered up ISAAC.



His Chapter after a brieft yet full description, presents us with a large and singular commendation of the grace of faith, the excellencie of this vertue is demonstrated by the efficacie, that in its powerfull effects we may behold its Divine nature. Peruse the Chapter, and you shall find her honoured as the mother of many graces, the spring

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of

of choyce duties; yea, the worker of strange Miracles. The truth of all which our Apostle illustrates by various examples, since though positive doctrines declare what faith can doe, yet plain examples shew what faith hath done: amongst many others wee have the president of *Abraham*, chiefe of the Patriarks, and father of the faithfull set before us: if you cast your eyes upon the 8 verse, you shall there finde an eminent instance of his faith, *When he was called to goe out into a place which he should after receive for inheritance, obeying, and he went out not knowing whither he went*, no easie matter, doubtlesse, for a man to part with his friends and live among strangers, to let goe his present possessions for uncertain enjoyments, and become a voluntary exile from his own Countrey, sence derides it, reason contemns it, but faith obeys it: nor doth his faith stay here, behold in the Text a harder task imposed upon, and performed by him; that was to leave his Countrey, this was to lose his *Isaac*: that was to sojourn in a strange Land, this to commit a strange act: that to forsake his fathers house, this to forgoe his sons life: in that he sayled against the winde, in this against the winde and tyde: but the strength of faith carryed him through, enabling him to leave his countrey when called; and to offer his *Isaac* when tryed.

By faith Abraham, &c.

In the words we have these three observables;

1 A singular fact performed by *Abraham*, *He offered up Isaac.*

2 A speciall occasion moving him to it, *when he was tryed.*

3 A powerfull cause enabling, and that was his *Faith.*

Or if you please to take the words in their naturall order, observe,

1 An act of Gods wisdome, to wit, the tryall of *Abraham*.

2 An act of *Abrahams* obedience in offering up *Isaac*.

3 The principle inclining him to perform his obedience, in reference to divine tryall, and that was his *Faith*.

Once more we have here considerable,

1 The state and condition to which *Abraham* was exposed, to wit, of temptation, *When he was tryed*.

2 His futable behaviour under that condition, in obedience to that tryall, *he offered up Isaac*.

3 The true ground of that obedient behaviour, to wit, *his faith*. According to each of these there are three assertions our Apostle layes down in the words.

That *Abraham* was tryed, that being tryed *he offered up Isaac*, that it was *by faith* he offered him up: and of these in order.

1 The state of temptation, to which *Abraham* was exposed when he was tryed, St. *Austine* speaking of the life of man tells us, *Tota vita humana tentatio est*, every mans life but much more the Saints is a continued tryall, no day passeth over his head without some clouds, and whiles he is in the sea of this world waves continually dafh upon him, but yet there are some dayes in the Calendar of his life which deserve, *Nigro carbone notari*; to be marked with a black coale as more cloudy then others there are some storms wherein the waves rage more vehemently, some times in which the Saint is exposed to strange and strong tryalls; and of such a

one our Apostle here speaketh, *When he was tryed.*

Quest. 1.

Ans. w.

But by whom is it that *Abraham* was tryed?

The Hebrews have a tradition that the Devill appeared to him in an angelicall forme, and by many arguments diswaded him from sacrificing his son, as being an unnaturall and impious act, contrary to the law of God and nature; nor is it improbable, that then the Devill was very busie with *Abraham* by temptation to withdraw him from obedience to Gods command, though the conceit of his visible appearing to him is altogether uncertaine; but this triall whereof my text speaks, is doubtless to be referred unto God himself: for so we finde it plainly mentioned in the history, *God tempted Abraham: Genes. 22. 1.* nor doe *Moses* and Saint *James* herein contradict each other, when the one sayth, *God tempted Abraham*, and the other *Chap. 1. 13. God tempteth no man*, but rather we must distinguish of a double temptation, the one *probationis*, the other *seductionis*, the one meere of tryall for our good, the other of enticement for our hurt; this latter cannot agree to the pure and holy God, but is the Devils work, who goes about seeking to insnare and devoure the former: as it stains not Gods purity, so it sutes well with his wisdom, which oft times puts him upon making experiments of his servants, as here he did of *Abraham*.

Aliter Deus tentat, aliter diabolus, diabolus tentat ut subruat, Deus tentat ut corrumat. Ambros.

Quest. 2.

But for what end, may some say, doth God tempt and try his peoole?

Ans. w.

I answer, for this double end.

1. Partly to disclose their corruptions, and discover those sins which were lurking in the heart: It is a common saying, *Magistratus judicat virum*, many men
that

that were good while confined to privacie, have proved licentious, when advanced to Magistracie; it's as true of tryals, wherein oft times, there is an eruption of of that corruption which one would not have imagined had lodged in their breasts, for this end God proved *Hezekiah*, that the pride of his heart might appear, and the Israelites to humble them under the sence of those corruptions which tryals manifested to be in them. a Chron. 32.
31.
Deut. 8. 2.

But,

2 Chiefly the end of tryall is a discovery of our graces, both their truth, and strength, their quality and measure. Tryalls shew what is the depth of our confidence, the breadth of our patience, the height of our love, and the length of our perseverance, observe but this tryall of *Abraham*, and you shall find what a many graces here was tryed and discovered: namely,

His faith, whether he would depend upon Gods, Promise above, against reason.

His obedience, whether he would yeild to Gods command against nature.

His love, whether his affection was more enlarged toward his son or his God.

Finally, his feare, whether he did reverentially acknowledge and stand in awe of Divine Sovereignty the truth is, *Apparet virtus arguiturque malis*: stars shine bright in the darkest nights, graces are manifest in the sharpest tryall; and for this end that our graces may appear, we are tryed, and they are exercised.

But what need is there that God should for these ends try his servants? Doth he not understand there thoughtes long before, are not both there sins and graces open in his sight; it is a strange expression which God useth

*Quest. 3.
Answ.*

Gen. 22. 12.

useth concerning himselfe in this tryall of *Abraham*,
Now I know that thou fearest God.

ὅτι ἴσα ἀντὶς
 μᾶλλον, ἀλλ'
 ἴσα τοῖς ἀλ-
 λοῖς δούλῳ; καὶ
 κατὰ δούλον
 αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγ-
 θρίαν παρὶς
 καταστροφῇ.
 Chrysost.

Quest. 4.

What did he not know before who is Omniscient? yes, doubtlesse, but we must remember, it is usuall with God, *Quod homini competit in iis transferri*, to apply that to himself which belongs to men, and to speake of himselfe after the manner of men; but the truth is Gods end of tryall is not that he might know but that we and others may know the graces of God that are in us: tryalls are oft times publishers of concealed vertues, neither the patience of *Job*, wisdom of *Solomon*, or the faith of *Abraham*, would have been so famous had it not been for tryalls.

Answ.

But how and by what meanes doth God try his servants?

Luke 16. 12.

Gen. 22. 2.

Divines answer two ways, *factis, verbis*; by deeds & words: by deeds, when either he substracts his grace from us, leaving us to our selves; as he did *Hezekiah*, *To try all that was in his heart*, or else when he brings us into straits, & lays upon us afflictions, so he was forty yeares in leading of the children of Israel through the wilderness, to prove them, sometimes by words and commands, which he enjoyns us, such was that command which Christ gave to the young man in the Gospel, *To sell all he had*; and this which he gave to *Abraham*, *take thy son, and offer him for a burnt offering*; and if you please to take a serious view of this command, you shall find it was a sore tryall, and that there was a strange probation in this Divine precept: for consider,

1 Whom doth the command concerne? not a servant, or a friend, or an allye, but a son; and him not an adopted, but a naturall son: not of many but an only son
 by

by *Sarah*, one that was the son of his love, of his hope, yea, of his old age; a childe of promise, of prayers, nay, tears.

2 What it is that is required? is it to send him a far off into some strange Country? is it to part with him and not see his face for some yeares? is it to have him taken away by death, through some visitation of Gods hand? all of these would have been sad tryalls: nay, but it is to lay violent hands upon him and cut him off by an untimely slaughter: but whose hands must they be, may his servants carry him away to some remote place out of his sight and there kill him, or is it only to stand by, look on and suffer him to be slain; no, he himself must offer him up: *Abraham* must not onely have his eyes on, but his hands in this bloody act, he must not only be a spectator of, but an actor in this dolefull Tragedy: the tender father must imbrue his hands in the blood of his innocent childe. God had tryed *Abraham* before many wayes, calling him to goe out of his Countrey, suffering that contention between him and *Lot*, in the battell he had with the five Kings, in the circumcising of his household, in the casting out of *Ishmael*, but all short of this, in sacrificing of his *Isaac*, which *Abraham* here was put upon, and our Apostle means in these words, *When he was tryed*. To apply this.

Let the Saints of God learn continually to expect and prepare for tryals, let no son of *Abraham* hope to scape temptation, when he sees the bosome in which he desires to rest, assaulted with difficulties, nor must we onely stand in fear of diabolical suggestions, but in expectance of divine temptation; the truth is, try-

Use 1.

1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.

tryals are both necessary and precious, needfull and usefull: Saint *Peter* joynes both together, *Ye are in heaviness, if need be, and the tryall of your faith being being much more precious then that of gold*: the shaking of the trees by the winde, the casting of gold into the fire, is not more usefull for the setting of the one, and purifying of the other, than tryals are for Gods servants: Nor must we onely expect single but successive tryals, like *Jobs* Messengers, one upon the neck of the other: When one woe is past look for another to come, and that many times on a suddain, in matters we are least aware of: nor let us onely prepare for many, but great and fore tryals, such as will not only rend our garments but break our hearts, tryals in our neereff friends, deereff comforts, the delight of our eyes, joy of our hearts, and breath of our nostrils, such were *Jobs*, in his cattell, the support of his estate, his children, the fruit of his loyns, nay, in the wife of his bosome, and the smiting of his own body: such was *Abrahams* in the Text, in his near and dear *Isaac*.

2 Since we must be tryed, look we to the soundnesse of our graces that they be such as will abide tryall: paint will melt at the heat, while the naturall complexion remains: drosse will consume in the fire while the gold grows purer: bad stoffe will shrink in the wetting, whilst that which is good retains its measure: finally, the house that is built upon the sand falls down at the blowing of the winde, while that which is built upon the rock remains: Seeming grace vanishes in the times of tribulation, onely true grace retains its lustre, continues firm, nay, grows purer in fiery tryals. And since wee must expect strong tryals, look we to the strength

strength of our graces, *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small*; saith Solomon, *Prov. 24. 10.* adversity though it be a hard tyrant, yet it is a right Judge speaking truly what our graces are: *Nemo vires suas in pace cognoscit*, no, one knowshis strength in peace, a sharp battle calls for courage in the souldier, hard weather makes the weak body shrinke, every cock-boat can swim in the river, its the lusty ship must saile in the Ocean; we meet with strong tryalls, we must labour for strong graces ever remembreing this for our comfort, that Divine wisdom and goodnesse will proportion the tryall to our strength: a skilfull Physician in potions considers the strength of his patient, a wise Scholmaster in his lessons observes the ability of his Scholler, and our gracious God in his tryals remembers what wee are and will lay no heavier burthen on our shoulders then we are able to beare: that of the Apostle is in this sence truly applicable; he hath both *milk for babes*, and *meat for strong men*; and if he impose so great a tryall as the slaying of a son it shall be upon an *Abraham* that is strong in faith, vigorous in grace, and knoweth how to obey so severe a command which leads me to the.

2 Generall *Abrahams* obedient behaviour under his tryall, *He offered up Isaac*; God puts him upon it, and he sets about it, and having received an injunction, puts it in execution: *He offers up Isaac*.

But here some, perhaps, may tax our Apostle as a false relater of the story, since indeed *Isaac* was not offered up, but a Ram, the answer is easie.

1 Hee offered, that is, *Offerre capis*; hee began to offer him, he had taken his journey, clave the wood,
C
and

*Fieri dicitur
quod tentatur
feri. Rib.*

and was come to the mount ; being there, he had built an altar , laid the wood in order on that altar , bound and laid his son on that wood, stretched forth his hand, took the knife to slay his son ; the knife was even at his throat, and nothing wanting but the last blow to have done execution ; and so on *Abrahams* part there was no deficiency in fulfilling this probatory command of God.

Hier.

Calv.

2 He offered, that is, *Voluntate jugularvit* ; he offered him in his intention and readinesse of will , *Immolatio Isaac, ab animi affectu censetur*, his sacrificing of *Isaac* is reckoned not from the action but his affection, and

Pareus.

3 He offered him, that is, *interpretativè obtulit* ; in regard of Gods account and esteem : that which was but begun by *Abraham* is consummated in Gods sight, and his readinesse to sacrifice is interpreted as an actual performance of it, thus *Pareus* upon the text *Obtulit ille holocaustum, non factò quidem, sed prompta voluntate & obedientia quam Deus acceptavit, & Scriptura celebrat pro facto.* *Abrahams* willingnesse to offer his son is accepted with God , and is recorded in Scripture as if it had been really done : excellently *Saint Chrysostom* to this purpose, so far (sayth he) as concerned the fathers will , he had already imbrued his hands in his sons blood, and therefore that Father brings in God commending his ready performance of what he had enjoined, *ut nix in ignem dicitur ipse applicavit &c. & quodam dicitur verbum, Thou didst not spare him at my command , I have spared him for thy obedience,*

Chrysost.

obser.

To summe up this, it lets us see the gracious goodnesse of God, who is pleased to accept the will for the deed, and accounts what we would doe as if we had done

done it; when we perform any duty, it is not *quid facis*, but *quo animo*, what we doe, but with what minde we doe it; and as the action is never accepted without the affection, so sometimes the affection is regarded without the action: true it is, where God affords ability, and gives opportunity, he expects the expression of our will by the execution of the act, but if either be denyed (as here God sent his Angel to stay *Abrahams* hand, and many times he is pleased to withhold enablements to good duties) then he mercifully accepts our intention and endeavour, in this sence a poor man may be more charitable then the rich, according to that of our Saviour concerning the widow, *Verily this poor widow hath cast in more then all they that have cast into the treasury*: more for the manner, though lesse for the matter, not so much, yet with more cheerfulness, and so it was more in Gods estimation. In this regard a man that dieth in his bed, may yet be a Martyr in divine account, not *opere* but *voluntate*, reall suffering but propense willingness to lay down his life if God had called him to it: finally, by this means it is, we fulfil that command of our Saviour; *in taking up the crosse daily*, that is, *semper* *animus habere paratum*, being in a daily readinesse to beare whatsoever crosse it shall seem good to Divine wisdom to inflict upon us.

Mark 12. 43.

Luke 9. 21.
Sicilia.

It is that which may yield abundant comfort to weak Saints, and tender consciences, who are oft times sadly perplexed at the non performance of those duties, the omission whereof is caused, not through want of will but power, surely what the Apostle sayth, in the point of charity, is true in regard of all other services. *If there be first a willing minde, it is accepted according to*

11se.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

that a man hath, not according to that a man hath not. I would not have prophane carelesse sinners encourage themselves from this comfortable Doctrine, who pretend to good desires, whilst they improve not the opportunity and ability God puts into their hands of doing good, and which is worse, please themselves in the vain excuse of their good meanings, whilst they impatiently go on in evill ways; such lasie desires will be no sufficient plea at Gods bar, and they will finde that usuall maxime true, too late, *Hell is full of good wishes, Heaven of good works.* But as for weak Christians, who doe what they can, and would doe what they cannot, let them take comfort in this meditation, that the sincerity of their intention shall be regarded, and rewarded by God. It was the complaint of holy Paul, concerning himselfe, *When I would doe good evill is present with me, so that the good I would doe I doe not, and the evill I would not doe, that I doe:* and surely if he, well may we have cause of taking up the same complaint, but though we complain, yet let us not despair; it is observable what a candid interpretation our Saviour makes of his Disciples sleep in the midst of his agony, excusing it as a fault arising only from the weaknesse of their flesh, not defect of their will, *the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*, and it is his gracious promise not to *quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed*: know then, oh thou dejected soul; though thou canst offer nothing to God but a Turtle, that is, *gemutus* a sound of sorrow that thou canst do no better, or a pair of Pigeons that is well wishing, a desire to do good, God will accept and account of thy will as the work; it was so with Abraham, whose reall intention

of

Rom. 7. 18, 19.

Matth. 26. 41.

Matth. 12. 20.

of offering was esteemed and is registred as an actuall execution *He offered up Isaac*, to let this goe.

That which is principally observable in these words, is the nature and strength of *Abrahams* obedience; God imposes a strange command upon him, he denyes not, delayes not his obedience, he doth not consult with flesh and blood, harkens not to naturall affection, acquaints not the wife of his bosome with his intention, but obsequiously follows divine injunction, he well knew, that though he were *Isaacs* father, yet he was Gods servant, and though his love as a father would have diverted him from the slaughter, yet his duty as a servant engaged him to the sacrifice of his son: his son was dear to him, but his God was dearer; affection was strong in him, but grace was stronger; *τὸ ὄντι ἵπταται δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφείᾳ ἀντιτάσσεται τὸ πᾶν ἔργον κατὰ τὸν νόμον τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς ἀντιτάσσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ*: hee casts away all naturall, and embraceth divine love; he trampleth upon fatherly bowels, and resists not his Fathers call. Thus he became obedient, though against his will, yet with his wil, in the sacrifice of his Son, one wil sacrificed another, his spirituall will to serve his God; overcame his naturall will to save his childe: and so hee set upon this unnatural work of offering up *Isaac*.

One would have thought that in so neere a tryall, so harsh a command *Abraham* through frailty might have replied against God, with murmuring, as those *Israelites* did upon a lesse occasion when they wanted food, *Would God wee had dyed in the wilderness*, *Exod. 16. 3.* flesh and blood would have broken out into these or the like expressions. *What, Exod. 17. 3. dost thou make me with thy gift, that so soon thou takest him away, my command-*
est

διὰ τὴν πα-
τίρα ἀβελήσας
ποιήσαι ἱσά
παι δακτύλου
ἀδελφῶν ἀνερ-
γῶν.

est me to throw him away, would thou never hadst bestowed a son upon me, rather then so suddenly to snatch him from me? why didst thou make me a father, if now I must become a murderer of my childe? far better I had been childlesse, then now to make my selfe so. But far be such thoughts from Abraham, who had learned this sacred lesson, not to murmur but to obey, had it been any but an Abraham, he would doubtlesse have returned an excuse and said (to use Naamans words) In this the Lord pardon his servant, any thing but my Isaac, thou shalt command, him I cannot, know not how to part with, how- ever it might seem no more then just for Abraham in this case to expostulate with God in these or the like words. Doth the God of mercie delight in cruelty, and piety it self command murder? will justice require the slaughter of an innocent, and canst thou in equity desire the bloud of the guiltlesse? or if thou wilt needs have an humane sacrifice, is none but Isaac fit for thine Altar, and must none offer him but Abraham? Shall these hands destroy the fruit of my loyns? must I that was the instrument of his life, become the means of his death? Can not I be faith- full unto thee, unlesse I be unnaturall to my childe? Why did I so long way for him? Why didst thou at last bestow him, if I must now part with him? How shall I look Sarah in the face when I have slain her son? How will she stretchens curse my sight for my cruelty, and say, there goes the man who cut the throat of his own childe? But Abrahams obedience had taught him better, not to dispute but to obey. I hear him answering Gods com- mand in these or the like submissive terms: Blessed be thou, Lord, thou hast said for my Isaac, thou shalt give him; mine strength shall be precious in my eyes yet thou art more: true,

true, he is my son, but thou art my God, to me it will prove
 a bitter losse, I, but to thee it will become a sweet sacrifice;
 what though my wife may blame me, yet thou commandest
 me? better shee call me a bloody husband, then thou an in-
 dutifull servant? What though the world accuse me of
 cruelty, yet thou requirest it as a duty? better I be in their
 eyes an unnaturall father, then in thine an ungracious
 son: were he ten thousand Isaacs, I dare not, I will not
 spare him, but am ready, though against my own, to doe
 thy will ô God. But here a farther doubt may be mo-
 ved, how *Abraham*, though he would, could offer
Isaac: *Abraham* was old and feeble, *Isaac* young and
 lusty, though one had a command of offering, yet the
 other none of suffering, and the law of nature would
 teach *Isaac* to endeavour the preservation of his life,
 though a father came to take it from him. To this Di-
 vines answer, that *Isaac* being religiously educated, and
 no doubt, by his father, sufficiently informed of Gods
 will in this particular, submitted himselfe to be offered
 up. Sutable to this purpose is that of *Saint Chrysostom*,
 ἡμεῖς οὖν ἰσχυρὸν ὁ Ἰσαὰκ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἡρώδης ἀντὶ τοῦ
 θύματος. *Isaac* gave himself to his Father, as freely as
Abraham gave him to God: Whom should I first ad-
 mire, to whom shall I give the greatest honour, the ten-
 der father that offered his son: or the obedient son sub-
 mitting to his father, even to the death: thus there was
 the same minde, the like affection both in *Abraham* and
Isaac; so that the courage of the Father seemed to be
 transplanted into the son, and the innocency of the son;
 not wanting unto the father: that golden-mouthed
 Oratour illustrated this, whilest hee fitly bringeth in
Abraham, thus be-speaking his son, *Suffer me, ô my son,*
suffer

suffer me to perform the command of my God, that God that made thee, calls for thee, hee that gave thee, seeks thee: he that created thee, desires thou shouldest be sacrificed to him; thou wilt be a sacrifice, so much the more acceptable: by how much the more willingly thou entertainest the glorious benefits of death: and then Isaac sweetly complying with his fathers desire. My father, perform what thou art commanded, doe the office thou art enjoined, I resist not, refuse not: what thou wilt I will, what thou desirest, I submit to, and with the same readinesse I embrace death, as I know thou doest by Gods command inflict it. See here a rare patterne of obedience to parents in Isaac, who suffered Abraham, to God in Abraham, who offered up Isaac. This latter is especially presented in the Text, and ought principally to be imitated by us, and though we cannot attain, yet let us aspire to that height of obedience which Abraham practiced: indeed, herein is the tryall of our submission, when in things contrary to our nature, contradictory to our desires, crosse to our reason, we can obey God; it is the aggravation of disobedience in easie precepts to rebell, it is the commendation of obedience in difficult commands to submit, to obey God in what suites with our temper is not praise worthy, but then to yield when nature and reason oppose is most laudable. Indeed, *hic labor; hoc opus*; to strive against the stream, row against the tyde; go against the haire, act against the dictates of our own naturall and carnall affections is the difficulty: and withall the excellencie of obedience.

To close up this in a three-fold speciall application:
 1 Though God call not upon us to offer up our
 sons,

sons, yet hee requires us to offer up our sinnes, there is none of us but in this sence hath an *Isaac*, a *dilectum delictum*, some darling lust, bo some corruption, which he expects we should part with at his call, but alas how far short are we of this *Patriark*? he offered up a dutifull *Isaac*, we will not sacrifice a rebellious lust; he at a single command went about the work, we neglect after many precepts, often intreaties and frequent threatnings; he rose early in the morning to slay his son, we make it our evening sacrifice, and scarce thinke of mortifying our lusts, till death is ready to kill us; finally, he would have sacrific'd his son, in whom all Nations were to be blest, we will not slay our sins which otherwise will make us for ever curst; but o sinner, how long wilt thou hug that in thy bosome which is Gods hate and will be thy ruine, think thou hearest a voice from heaven once more be-speak thee as God did *Abraham*, *Take now thine Isaac whom thou lovest, thy sin wherein thou delightest, and offer it up to me for Sacrifice*: or as Christ did the Jews: *as for my enemies (thy lusts) which would not that I should* Gen. 22. 1.
reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me. O then delay not, consult not, neglect not, but while it is called to day, binde thy corruptions on the Altar of the Law, take the knife of Gods Word in thy hand, and cut the throat of thy sins, that they may become a sweet smelling Sacrifice in Gods nostrils, and thou an amiable Priest in his eyes.

2 Though God do not call us as he did *Abraham*, to offer up our children, yet he sometimes requires us to neglect both children and parents, and all naturall relations for his sake, and surely in such a case, *Pietas*

Hier.

est impium esse pro Domino, it is piety towards God, to be unnaturall to our friends, our blessed Saviour hath told us, *He that loveth father or mother more then me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more then me, is not worthy of me*, Mat. 10. 37. Another

Luke 14. 23.

Evangelist useth a more harsh expression, *He that cometh to me and hateth not all these*: strange that love it selfe should require hatred, but yet just, not in an absolute but comparative sence, we must not love father or mother more then him, yea, when their desires come in competition with his will, we must hate them for him, we must say as *Levi, nescio vos*, I know you not, or with Christ to his mother, *quid mihi tecum? woman, what have I to do with thee?* trampling under foot all naturall relations, which would hinder us from obedience to divine injunctions. It was a pious (though erroneous) spirit that lodged in the breast of Sir *Thomas Moor*, once Lord Chancellour of this Kingdom, who regarded not the prayers, nay tears, of his dearest wife, when shee perswaded him with the forfeiture of his conscience to endeavour the restauration of his liberty, let us follow his pattern, that no respect either to wives or children may withdraw us from the performance of our duties to God.

3 Finally, though God doe not call us to offer up our children, yet many times he calls to us to part with them; though not to sacrifice them with our own hands, yet to resigne them up to his dispose; oh let us learn by *Abrahams* example, chearfully to give up our dearest comforts to that God who hath given them unto us, he was willing to an *obolus*, so far obedient as himselfe to offer his son, shall not we be content with an *obolus*,
lit,

lit, that God should take away wife or children, or any enjoyment from us, : good old *Eli*, when acquainted by *Samuel* with Gods severe intentions against himselfe, his sons, his family, sits down quietly and sayes submissively, *Dominus est, It is the Lord, let him doe what it seems good in his sight.* 1 Sam. 3. 17. Holy *Job*, when informed by severall messengers of the losse of his Oxen by the *Sabeans*, of his Camels by the *Caldeans*, of his Sheep and servants by a fire from God, nay of his sons and daughters by a winde from the wilderness, worshiped, saying, *Dominus dedit, The Lord gives, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Job 1. 21. Oh let us write after these copies, and what we daily pray for, cheerfully, submit unto, that the will of the Lord may be done, let all parents say, to use the Prophets words, though in another case, *Behold, I and the children whom thou, o Lord, hast given me, are as thy dispose, doe with me and mine as it pleaseth thee,* And that we may attein this gracious frame of spirit, let us take notice of, and strive after that grace of faith wherein *Abraham* excelled, and by which he was enabled to so difficult a work: which leads me to the

3 Generall, namely, the true ground of *Abrahams* obedient behaviour in those words by faith, indeed nothing but faith could enable him to quit himselfe in so great a tryall. I deny not but even Heathens have sacrificed themselves and their children unto death, but upon what grounds? for the most part affection of vain glory, at the best, but love of their Countrey, was that which bereaved them of their lives, *Abrahams* offering up his *Isaac* was upon another ground, in a religious observance of divine precept, to which nothing but faith

could enable : the truth is, if we rightly weigh this act of *Abraham*, we shall finde there was great need of faith to unlock the difficulties, silence the reasonings, & answer the doubts which could not but arise in his spirir.

There was a double objection which this Patriark might make against offering up his son, to both which only faith could give an answer.

The one in reference to the comand which God gave. The other in respect of the promise which God made.

1 Besides the Law of nature God hath given an expresse command, *Thou shalt not kill*, and well might *Abraham* argue, *if I must not kill any man, much lesse my son, surely God is either contrary to himselfe, or else this bloody precept came not from him, but is a meer delusion of the Devill*, but here faith steps in, unfolds the riddle, assures *Abraham* it was no other then God who had given this in charge, that he is an absolute illimited commander, and therefore might enjoyn what he pleased, that he is soveraigne Lord of his own Law, and therefore may dispence with it when he will, thus silencing this objection *by faith he offers up Isaac*, and it is a rule we are to take notice of, that where Gods commands seem or doe really clash one against another, the lesser must give way to the greater, and ordinary to extraordinary precepts, the ten Comandements are the generall rule of our life, yet if a speciall intervene as here did to *Abraham*, faith gives that the prehe-
minence.

μενιμαχης
μενι ε απλ
μενι ιωα
μενι, Chrys.

2 Another objection might well arise from Gods promise God hath assured *Abraham* of an innumerable seed, as the stars of heaven, and the sands on the sea shore, all these to come out of *Isaacs* loynes, and yet

yet God commands that *Isaac* should be slain. Might not *Abraham* well have reasoned thus. *What, Lord, are thy decrees changable, or thy promise failable? how can these two stand together, Isaac shall be a father of many nations, and yet he must dye by his fathers hands? what fruit is to be expected from a dry root, or what hopes can there be in a dead Isaac?* the truth is to sense and reason, there is a manifest contrariety between his precept and his promise, neyther of these eyes can see how God should fulfill what hee had promised if *Abraham* perform'd what he required, but faith hath a piercing sight; lo, she steps in, untyes the knot, and thus bespeaks *Abraham*: *Fear not Abraham to sacrifice thy son, hee that commands thee to kill him, wants not power to quicken him; the same hand which raised him from the dead wombe of Sarah, can revive him from the ashes of a sacrifice, thou gottest thy Isaac by believing, thou shalt not lose him by obeying.* Now faith hath got the day, obtained the victory. What cruelty doth in others, that faith did in *Abraham*, makes him not to be moved at the strangeness of the fact, God knew he had to do with an *Abraham*, and therefore puts upon him such a comand; *Abraham* knew he had to do with a God, and therefore believes what he commands is good: and what he promisseth is infallible. Thus being carelesse of the means, not doubting of the end, he sets upon the work, and by faith offers up *Isaac*.

Briefly, faith wrought in *Abraham* a double effect which inclined him to offer up *Isaac*.

- The one a dependance on Gods power.
- The other submissive to Gods will.
- The one confidence on Gods truth in promising.

The

The others reverence of Gods Majesty in commanding.

In regard of the promise it assured him God was able to raise up *Isaac* from the dead, as it is *Verse 19th*, that notwithstanding all seeming contrarieties, and though hee saw no way of accomplishment, divine power could act above, against means, and so he believeth above and beyond hope.

In reference to his command, it perswaderh him this was Gods will to which he must subscribe, that the Almighty was his sovereign Lord to dispose of him and his how hee pleased, and therefore ought to be obeyed.

Thus being confident of Gods ability and fidelity in making good his word, being resolved to exalt Gods will above his own, hee readily performeth his duty, and by faith when he was tryed, offered up *Isaac*.

To shut it up in a brief application, learne wee all to prize the worth, and endeavour for the growth of this grace of faith, we know not what tryals God may call us, but, alasse, how shall we bear them if not supported by faith, its faith is the only weapon to resist Satans temptations, and the best staffe to hold us up under divine tryals: this grace of faith, as it is of singular worth, so of universall use, in prosperity it teacheth us how to use comforts, in adversity; how to want them; without this; we can neither do what is enjoyned, nor beare what is inflicted: oh then let our care be with all our gettings to get faith, and not only to get but strengthen faith, since its strong faith gives us strong support in strong tryals; and in particular, that wee may with

Abra-

Abraham, in some sence offer up our *Isaac*, resigne our children, yea all earthly comforts with cheerfulness, when he tryes us in them, and calls for them from us, let us pray with the Apostles, *Lord, increase our faith*, true it is, a naturall man when he sees there is no possibility of enjoyment, may be contented to want, just like a man who in apparent danger of the ship, with a nilling willingness and mixt consent casts his goods into the Sea; but its only the believing Saint who makes a free and full resignation of himself, and comforts into Gods hand. There is a four-fold enablement which faith contributes to this difficult duty of offering up our *Isaac*, parting with our dearest comforts when God calls.

1 It acknowledgeth Gods Sovereignty over all, and teaches the soul to say, my state, my friends, my children, my self are not my own but Gods, *who may doe with his own what he will.*

2 It confesseth the inconstancy of all worldly enjoyments, and lets us see upon what uncertain terms we hold creature-comforts, being only tenants at the will of the Lord, of whatsoever we possesse: thus it learns those *that buy to be as that possessed not, to rejoyce as those rejoyced not; and those that have wives and children, as though they had none*, continually expecting to be bereaved of them. 1 Cor. 7-29, 30

3 It assures us of great good by obedientiall submission, and that there is no losse in giving up all to God, its good for mee to enjoy this comfort, sayth sence, its better to part with it, faith faith, since there is no better way to retaine a comfort then in a faithfull care-

carelesse to surrender it up to God, witnesse *Abraham* in the text, hee offers and God spares his *Isaac*.

4 It convinces us of Gods All-sufficiencie, presents him to the soule as an universall good, finding all losses to be made up in him alone: what sweetnesse can be suckt out of any or all the creatures below; that, and more doth faith finde in the God above, as once *Briſeis* said to *Achilles*.

Tu Dominus, tu vir, tu mihi frater eris.

Thou art Lord, brother, husband, children, all to me. Thus will faith draw strength from God to support us under, and carry us through the saddest tryals. That therefore we may answer when God calls, obey when he commands, resigne when he requires, and be found blamelesse in the day of tryall: let our care be in all exigencies to quicken faith, so shall wee walke in the steps of faithfull *Abraham* now, and after the cheerfull endurance of tryals for a time, we shall rest in the bosome of *Abraham* for ever, finding that gracious promise fully verified, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

James 1. 12.

To end all, with one word of advice to you the father of this son, whom God hath pleased in mercy (I hope) to take away; I may truly affirme, God hath bereaved you of your *Isaac*, one who had learnt with *Isaac* obedience to you, no small vertue in children, especially when

when grown up in years, (since it too often falls out that they come no sooner to know themselves, but they forget their parents) one in whom you had much comfort, on whom you had placed singular affection, of whom you and all that knew him, had great hopes; his naturall endowments, ingenuous education, skill in variety of Languages; modest and civill behaviour, promising in future time abundant fruit: but this tree God hath cut downe betimes, and in charity (we may hope) transplanted to his own paradise, but, doubtlesse, it is no small losse to the Garden of your Family, and cannot but be a sore tryall of your patience, that therefore you may be comforted, look on *Abraham*, and let his practice be the matter of your imitation your triall, in a double respect falls short of his, his was an only son; you have one yet surviving: hee was to be executioner of his own son, but it is divine providence which by a sad accident hastened your sons death, since then your losse is lesse then his: let your submission be equall with his, and if you cannot keep even pace with him, yet be sure to follow him in those steps of faith and obedience, which he took, remember your son is not *amissus* but *pramissus*, lost but sent before you whether one day you and wee all must follow: in the mean time, think that God saith to you, as *Elkana* said to *Hannah*, *why weepest thou, and why is thy heart grieved, am not I better to thee than ten sons?* 1 Sam. 1. 8. O then let grace over-rule nature, faith suppress passion: and though you cannot but shew your self a tender father towards him, yet still behave your self as a son of *Abraham*, who by faith when he was tryed, offered up *Isaac*.